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EIGHTY-FOURTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

1540 House Office Building

Washington, D. C.

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August 8, 1955

Honorable Allen W. Dulles
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear Mr. Dulles:

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The Government Information Subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee has been established to look into the question of whether information in the possession of government agencies is sufficiently available to the press, the public, and within the government itself. The members of the Subcommittee -- Congressman Dante Fascell of Florida, Congressman Clare E. Hoffman of Michigan, myself, and ex officio member Congressman William L. Dawson of Illinois -- plan to study this problem thoroughly and objectively.

As a first step, we are asking all executive and independent agencies of the Federal government to answer the enclosed questionnaire. Our aim is not only to determine specific practices on the availability or withholding of information, but also to develop information on the expenditures, general policies, and authority of the executive and independent agencies in this field.

The Subcommittee would like the answers to cover the informational activities of your agency and all major subdivisions in specific terms.

May the Subcommittee receive the answers to this questionnaire by September 15, 1955, or earlier, if possible? We plan to compile and publish the replies.

By a cooperative effort, I am certain we can determine the informational practices of the various Federal executive and independent agencies and, possibly, suggest desirable administrative improvements or propose needed legislation.

Sincerely yours,


John E. Moss, Chairman
Government Information Subcommittee

JEM:as
Encl.

House of Representatives
Committee on Government Operations

Government Information Subcommittee
1540 House Office Building

QUESTIONNAIRE

I. GENERAL

1. What categories and types of information possessed by your agency are not available to:

- (a) The press and other information media serving the general public?
- (b) The Congress?
- (c) Other federal agencies?
- (d) Business, trade and other groups with an economic interest in the information?

(e) Research specialists, scientists, public affairs organizations and similar groups or individuals?

2. On what do you base authority for denying access to or not making available such information? Please provide copies of regulations, directives, letters, policy statements, etc. bearing on the withholding of information by your agency. Please cite any court decisions and statutes which relate to your agency.

3. What terms do you use to describe restrictions placed on imparting information?

(a) Please define each term to indicate the type of informational material which it includes, to what group or individuals it applies and what exceptions are made in its application.

(b) What proportion is withheld on each basis?

(c) What steps have been taken by your agency to insure that procedures for restricting information are not being abused?

(d) What persons in your agency are authorized to apply restrictions on imparting information in the first instance?

(e) What provisions are made for review of the decisions of those persons?

Questionnaire

-2-

(f) Who reviews the initial restrictions placed on imparting information?

(g) How often does your agency review information to which restrictions have been applied to determine whether the restrictions should be removed?

(h) Who removes the restrictions?

4. If the information from your agency is restricted on security grounds, list the specific statutes, Presidential directives or other bases for such action.

(a) What steps have been taken by your agency to insure that security classification procedures are not being abused?

(b) What persons in your agency are authorized to apply security classifications in the first instance?

(c) What provisions are made for review of initial security classification decisions?

(d) Who reviews initial classifications?

(e) How often does your agency review classified material to determine whether some of the material should be downgraded or declassified?

(f) Who revises classifications?

(g) What consideration is given to the public's right to know and to the importance of an informed public in the successful operation of the democratic form of government?

(h) What methods are used to determine whether potential enemy states already possess the information?

(i) What consideration is given to the importance of uniform availability of classified information among scientists, economists, administrators, and others entitled to special access to such information?

5. Please estimate the annual cost to your agency of administering security provisions applying to information held by the agency.

6. What categories and types of information about the activities of your agency are available to the organizations and individuals listed in Question No. 1 above?

Questionnaire

-3-

7. Please describe the organization within your agency for making information available to the press and the public, to Congress and to other federal agencies. Please estimate the annual cost.

8. Does information possessed by your agency reach groups or individuals not entitled to it by law, executive order, regulation or policy? If so, please explain.

9. Do you receive from other agencies complete and timely information when requested?

(a) In how many instances was information desired from other agencies denied from July 1, 1954, to July 1, 1955? Please explain.

(b) In how many instances was information possessed by your agency denied to other agencies from July 1, 1954, to July 1, 1955? Please explain.

(c) Please suggest ways of improving the flow of information among federal agencies.

10. How can the job of making available timely, factual, and pertinent information on the affairs of your agency be improved? Please recommend any necessary legislation.

II. PRESS

1. How many press conferences were held by your agency from July 1, 1954 to July 1, 1955?

(a) Who held these press conferences?

(b) What is the basis for accreditation of persons attending the conferences and, if special accreditation is required over and above the general accreditation of the Senate and House Press Galleries, what are the requirements?

(c) Are transcripts of the press conferences available?

2. How many formal or informal "background" or "briefing" sessions have been held by your agency for the press from July 1, 1954, to July 1, 1955, and who, in general, was invited?

Questionnaire

-4-

3. Which employees in your agency exercise public information functions including press contacts, radio-TV and other public appearances?

(a) What latitude do your press or public information employees have in answering questions from the press and public?

(b) Which employees are instructed not to comment to the press or public either formally or informally?

(c) Is any review made of the actual contacts of those authorized to speak to the press?

4. What specific restrictions or controls are imposed by your agency over what is authorized for publication, including so-called "strategic information?"

(a) Under what authority?

(b) Is special accreditation required now by your agency for representatives of the press covering either domestic or overseas activities? If so, please explain requirements and procedures.

(c) Are any special restrictions placed upon photographers or newsreel and television representatives?

(d) Is your agency now preparing, or do you have prepared, plans for news censorship in wartime or other national emergency?

(e) What is the nature of the plans or planning?

5. What specific requests from the press for information have been denied by your agency between July 1, 1954, and July 1, 1955?

(a) Has release of important information been delayed in any instances?

(b) Is information from your agency released simultaneously to all news media?

(c) Has your agency discriminated against any news media? Please explain.

III. CONGRESS

1. What categories and types of information are not furnished to:

(a) Individual Congressmen on request?

Questionnaire

-6-

6. How many employees of your agency are assigned the job of contact with or making information available for individual Congressmen or Congressional committees?

- (a) What are their titles?
- (b) If you have a Congressional liaison section, please describe its day-to-day operation.
- (c) Please estimate the annual cost to your agency of providing information to individual Congressmen.
- (d) To Congressional committees.

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- (b) Congressional committees on request?
- (c) Congressional committees upon subpoena?

2. If information is refused, on what authority is the refusal based:

- (a) To individual Congressmen?
- (b) To Congressional committees on request?
- (c) To Congressional committees upon subpoena?

3. How many instances have there been between July 1, 1954 and July 1, 1955 of refusal of information by your agency to:

- (a) Individual Congressmen on request?
- (b) Congressional committees on request?
- (c) Congressional committees upon subpoena?

4. Please outline the instances listed in Question 3 where the information was refused on the basis of the doctrine of executive communications.

5. What information does your agency regularly transmit to individual Congressmen, Congressional committees and the Congress as a whole?

- (a) Please explain the policies and practices of your agency on transmitting such information.
- (b) Please supply the regulations, directives, etc. regarding transmittal of this information.
- (c) Where this information is transmitted pursuant to statute, please supply citation.
- (d) Is all this information, in your opinion, timely, necessary and useful? Please explain.
- (e) Do security considerations affect your decision whether to supply information to individual Congressmen on request?
- (f) In this connection what use do you make of security files on Members of Congress?
- (g) Please suggest ways of improving the flow of information to individual Congressmen